



# SPADES AND CLUBS



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## U.S. NAVAL MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION 25

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### Ninth Naval Construction Regiment Transfers Authority to NMCB 25



Cmdr. David Marasco, (2nd from right), receives the transfer of authority from Commodore Terry Wilkerson, (center), during the ceremony in late March with Third Marine Aircraft Wing (FWD) Commanding Officer, Colonel Jonathan G. Miclot (right) presiding.

IRAQ—Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 25 received command authority from the 9th Naval Construction Regiment (9th NCR) on March 22. NMCB 25 replaced NMCB 22 who successfully completed their mobilization in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The change of command marked the end of NMCB 22's six-month deployment in Iraq and the beginning phase of extensive construction work for NMCB 25. Because most Seabees were already working at separate job sites, only a small detachment of chiefs and officers observed the event. Lt. Cmdr. Peter Muschinske, NMCB 25's chaplain, began the ceremony with a prayer. He asked for the particular blessing of wisdom and strength for all those having leadership positions. "Give us resolve and your power, so that we can stand here months from now and transfer authority to our successors. May this



chiefs and officers observed the event. Lt. Cmdr. Peter Muschinske, NMCB 25's chaplain, began the ceremony with a prayer. He asked for the particular blessing of wisdom and strength for all those having leadership positions. "Give us resolve and your power, so that we can stand here months from now and transfer authority to our successors. May this

CMDCM (SCW) Brian Benzinger updates the quarterdeck emblem with the battalion's designator.



mission support your larger mission of peace and justice for all.”

Wilkerson addressed the battalions next and thanked NMCB 22 for their hard work and for supporting the Second Marine Expeditionary Force (II MEF). “NMCB 22, you’ve done a fabulous job. Have a safe journey home, to a homecoming you all so richly deserve, where you will be reunited with your loved ones.”

Wilkerson welcomed NMCB 25 and shared his expectations. “NMCB 25, you have big shoes to fill. I know you’ll do a superb job as well. I’m looking for great things out of twenty-five. Have a safe deployment.”

Turning one last time to formally address his command in Iraq, Young remarked how proud and grateful he was of his fellow Seabees. He thanked them for their hard work and the goals they had accomplished. “I expected 110 percent effort from you during a demanding deployment and you came back with 140 percent.”

During the ceremony, Young ordered NMCB 22’s flag retrieved from the flag mast and Marasco ordered NMCB 25’s flag to be hoisted. A sense of belonging could be seen in the eyes of many NMCB 25 Seabees as they repeatedly stared aloft at their newly raised flag.

Afterward, during an emotional moment, members of NMCB 22 meticulously folded the battalion’s flag one final time before their long awaited trip home. The bittersweet farewell was highlighted by congratulatory handshakes from NMCB 25 and good luck wishes from NMCB 22.



Capt. Young and Cmdr. Marasco symbolically mark the transfer of authority from one battalion to another by cutting a cake marked with each unit’s logo.



A sense of ownership could be seen in the eyes of many NMCB 25 Seabees as they repeatedly stared aloft at their newly raised flag.

Although newly in command of NMCB 25, Marasco’s in-depth military background will serve him well. He took command of NMCB 25 in July 2005. In 2004 he served in Iraq with the Marine Expeditionary Force Engineer Group.

After the ceremony, the Seabees of NMCB 25 congratulated and thanked NMCB 22 for a seamless turnover. With much work expected from them during 2006, the Seabees of NMCB 25 are already working hard and leaning forward to continue their mission.



## Commanding Officer

**G**reetings family and friends of NMCB-25. As I write to you from my office in Western Iraq, I can tell you how very



pleased I am with the performance of our Seabees since our arrival here almost two weeks ago. Last week, we took over the helm from our sister battalion NMCB-22 and their Skipper Capt. Steve Young. We call that *Transfer of Authority*. We have lowered the "Lone Star" flag and raised the famous "Don't Tread on Me" flag in its' place.

Our Seabees immediately hit the ground running and have begun a variety of projects around our base and at other locations in Western Iraq. We look forward to soon having the rest of our Seabees in country. Following their departure from Port Hueneme, they will be working side by side with NMCB-40. It is very important for you to understand that our Seabees working with NMCB-40 will be very constrained on what they can share with you at home due to the sensitive nature and importance of the mission.

About a week ago we started getting our mail. Although we had a few minor hiccups, we are very pleased with the amount and timeliness of letters and packages received. Phone communications home can be challenging here; however, I know that our Seabees have been using the Morale, Welfare and Recreation center on base for both phone calls and e-mail. We are also fortunate to have two morale phones and computer terminals here and we are hoping that we can expand that capacity in the near future. Enjoy this edition of the NMCB 25 newsletter Spades and Clubs and have a great Seabee day.

### COMMANDING OFFICER

Cmdr. David F. Marasco  
CEC, USN

### EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Lt. Cmdr. Thomas D. Logan  
CEC, USN

### COMMAND MASTER CHIEF

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**BACKGROUND PHOTO:** This image was taken before one of NMCB-25's Seabee Convoy Security Elements stepped off on a mission in Western Iraq. Their boot prints show the powder-like quality of the sand in the area.

"Spades and Clubs" is U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Twenty-Five's official newsletter and is an authorized publication for members of the military service and their families. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the official views of the U.S. government, the Department of Defense, the Department of the Navy, or the command, and does not imply endorsement thereby.

Story submissions are encouraged from each detachment and Specialty Unit, but there is no guarantee each will be represented in every newsletter.

Comments, correspondence, and questions may be addressed to NMCB 25 Public Affairs, NMCB 25 Main Body, FPO AP 96601-5113.





Lt. Cmdr. Thomas D. Logan  
Civil Engineer Corps

## Executive Officer

**G**reetings from Iraq! With the exception of a few of our Seabees who are going to alternate detachment (Det) sites, we have moved into our permanent housing. Not having to live out of a sea bag is a joy.

Our admin department staff is working hard to quickly resolve administrative and pay problems. I get regular updates and monitor them to assure that issues are promptly resolved. We have an outstanding Det. in Port Hueneme who is supporting us as problems arise.

Our Seabees have hit the ground running and are hard at work. We all work a lot of hours. This has the positive effect of making time pass quickly until the day when we can rotate home.

Mail is starting to arrive on a regular basis, which has a real positive effect on morale. Keep those cards and letters coming!

## Seabees Work to Keep Their Cool

The desert region can be deceiving. Individuals not accustomed to the desert must drink water on a regular basis just to maintain a normal level of hydration. The dry air quickly evaporates your perspiration without notice.

For our hard working Seabees, undetected dehydration can be detrimental to their health and their mission. Members keep a close eye on one another to ensure unit fitness.

Staying healthy means drinking lots of water—even before you feel thirsty. This can mean drinking up to a quart of water an

**Utilitiesman 2nd Class Russell Sanborn uses a Camel Back® to keep hydrated.**



Photo by JO1 Benjamin Franklin

hour, as long as the individual doesn't exceed 12 quarts per day. Luckily for our Seabees, water is never far away.

Each Seabees carries their own water in the field, and the supply department has made it abundant at established Seabee work sites and all living quarters.

Pallets of bottled water are strategically located around these sites, so that Seabees always have water within reach. Now that's cool.



## Command Chaplain



Lt. Cmdr. Peter Muschinske

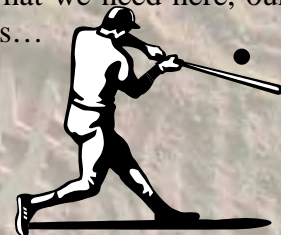
Yogi Berra, great major league baseball catcher and coach once said: "The future ain't what it used to be." In our case, that's because the *future* is now! Spring training is over for us. The Commodore (Commander of the Regiment) "threw out the first pitch" and our CO received it. The team (battalion) we replaced will go home to a new game as part of the "American" league. We can all take comfort in the fact that although some people left the team for various reasons, there was no one placed on the "injured reserve" as a result of a serious accident, hostile action or friendly fire incident. NMCB 25 has now stepped up to the plate. We are not merely a representative of our nation but part of the *Multi-National* league. We hope and pray that somehow all the runway repair, transport of supplies, training of the civilian work force and Iraqi Security forces, water well projects and public works will "be a hit" and that our sacrifices and strategy will result in a long-term victory for many, many people.



"Playing conditions" here are just fine, considering our circumstances. The "concessions" are not like home cooking nor are our "dug outs" as comfy as our dwellings and surroundings on our "home field." Everyone is his or her own "water boy/girl" but there are always cases of bottled water within arm's reach. We don't have to worry about mowing the infield or outfield grass. We don't anticipate any rain delays (though as we get on toward mid-season there may be some hot-weather delays). We are privileged to make this team and kudos to Seabees and families for accepting the call to the Major Leagues and agreeing to step up to the plate.

I invite you to pray for us. Remember our manager (Commanding Officer) and our bench coach (Command Master Chief). Pray for the backbone of the team, those Seabees who will bear the brunt of the physical work and the heat of the day. Be bold to pray for our safety and stamina as this "season" stretches over the spring and summer months. Remember that we are a "split squad", with groups of our Seabees forming new teams at different project sites, including those who will be with NMCB 40. While we have access to most of what we need here, our Ombudsman will be able to pass word on items you can send to support us...

I know that some of those projects are well under way. We are players in this serious and world-changing game, but we are also fans: Fans of all of you... and the incredible sacrifices you are making back home. May the Lord bless you and us, and bless many through all of us. Let's "Play ball!"



LCDR Peter K. Muschinske  
Team Chaplain.



## Chronological Catch-Up

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NMCB 25 has been moving very quickly. Now that almost everyone has completed the initial deployment, here is a glimpse of the last two weeks.



Construction Electrician 1st Class Dina Pinkston helps load a truck at Port Hueneme with sea bags before the final move.

Seabees formed human chains to quickly move the heavy gear from the weigh-in center to the trucks. Average weight of a typical sea bag was around 60 pounds.



(l to r) Culinary Specialist 3rd Class Michelle Hubble, Equipment Operator 2nd Class Shayne Johnson, and Equipment Operator 2nd Class Carl Ploense quickly pass gear down the line. Most Seabees packed two seabags and one ALICE-pack (backpack) for the deployment.





### The Paper Chase

Yeoman 2nd Class Rebecca Palomares (left) and Personnel Specialist 2nd Class Jones work out final administrative details concerning deployment during the final day at Port Hueneme.

Chief Personnel Specialist Judith Ratajczak (not pictured) organized the checkout process so that it was orderly and timely for the large group.



Seabees remained quarantined just prior to shipping out because they received the small pox vaccination. Entertainment was provided during the medical stand down. American Red Cross volunteers supplied the delayed party members with free food and drinks during the final stages of out-processing.



Culinary Specialist 3rd Class Michelle Hubble awaits her vaccination shot. Members who received the immunization long ago received larger doses of the vaccination in order to overcome their limited immunity to the vaccine.



Seabees stayed in temporary housing during their transitional stay in Kuwait. During this period they received in-depth training from both Navy and Marine Corps instructors. It also gave the Seabees a chance to get acclimated to the climate while wearing their "battle rattle", which is the term used to describe the extra gear they must carry in the field.

The simple life. Most Seabees kept their bags packed during their short stay in Kuwait. One Seabee said, "I know exactly where everything is at—because whatever it is, I'm certain it's located at the very bottom of my sea bag."







A desert range is prepared for weapons practice. Seabees used the opportunity to sight-in their weapons while wearing the full compliment of battle gear. Sand and dust are major obstacles to keeping weapons functioning properly and regular maintenance is required in this desert environment.



Builder Constructionman Jeffrey McClanahan scans the desert beyond the range of fire. By assisting range control during weapons practice, spotters could call for a cease-fire when animals inadvertently wandered near a danger area.

Stray camels only appeared once during the practice fire and the range was safely secured for a short period.



Builder 1st Class Vincent Del Signore and Engineering Aide 1st Class Matthew Krause don protective goggles as the wind picks up dust during range practice. Eyewear with UV lenses helps protect the Seabees from both the direct rays of the sun as well as the incidental light reflected off the sand.





Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Jessica Johnson (left) and Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Theresa Veldhouse treat an injured Seabee for a minor abrasion near the firing range. Seabees assist the hospital corpsman by carrying an emergency medical kit with him or her wherever they go.

## Reenlistment

Construction Mechanic 2nd Class Donald Kugler reenlisted for six more years while serving in Kuwait. He said that reenlisting in the desert was something special and an event he would never forget. He works as a floor mechanic for the Alfa Company. This is Kugler's second deployment.



(Left photo) Construction Mechanic 2nd Class Donald Kugler reenlists for six more years with the help of Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Logan. (Right photo) Master Chief Utilitiesman (SCW) Guy Mead congratulates Kugler following the ceremony.



## Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Visits Seabees

The Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, Terry D. Scott, recently visited with Seabees while overseas. He thanked the service men and women for their sacrifices and the work that they have chosen to do.

He reminded them that the appreciation was not his alone, but from the millions of families back home who support their effort to protect our country.

He also spoke about changes that will occur to our way of life in the military. Changes in the areas of education and training that will help to make our forces even stronger in the future.



Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Terry D. Scott uses a question and answer session to address concerns of fellow Seabees.



Seabees load a truck for the final push to Iraq. Temperatures during the winter months are relatively cool at night, which made perfect working conditions for hauling the heavy gear.





Senior Chief Steelworker (SCW) Louis Hogan is promoted to Master Chief.



Senior Chief Construction Mechanic (SCW) Robert Marconi is promoted to Master Chief



Chief Builder (SCW) Timothy Cooper is promoted to Senior Chief.



Chief Equipment Operator Thomas Risley is promoted to Senior Chief.



Chief Yeoman (SCW) Marc Wildeman is promoted to Senior Chief.

From the Command Master Chief and the NMCB 25 Chief Petty Officer's Mess, greetings to all the families and friends of our NMCB 25 Seabees. Results from the E8-E9 selection board have brought us two master chiefs and four senior chiefs.

We are proud to announce Master Chief (SCW) Louis Hogan, Master Chief (SCW) Robert Marconi, Senior Chief (SCW) Tim Cooper, Senior Chief (SCW) Mark Wildeman, Senior Chief Thomas Risley and Senior Chief (SCW) Michael Helgeson. Congratulations to these individuals for a job well done.



### Lt. Cmdr. Logan Receives the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal



Commodore Terry Wilkerson, Ninth Naval Construction Regiment (9th NCR), presented Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Logan, executive officer of NMCB 25, with the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal. The award certificate briefly lists Logan's award merits, including his service as operations officer for NMCB 28 from October 2003 through September 2005. Logan coordinated the execution of over 1200 man-days of fleet support and over 3200 man-days of training for each of the inclusive annual training periods.

The award also states that, "During the battalion's two four-day field exercises, he successfully oversaw the operation of the combat operations center and the training of junior officers. His superlative performance, steadfast perseverance and outstanding devotion to duty reflected credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

### Seabees Work Toward Earning the Seabee Combat Warfare and Fleet Marine Force insignia.

Seabees are working long hours, but they are also studying to earn their Seabee Combat Warfare (SCW) and Fleet Marine Force (FMF) pins. These insignia are sign of prestige among Seabees.

According to the Personnel Qualifications Standards for SCW and FMF, "Warfare Qualified Sailors are an essential element of our Navy's Operational Primacy. The objective of the Seabee Combat Warfare Program is to provide the candidate an introduction into the processes and topics necessary to support the warfighting requirements of our Navy. This personnel warfare qualification standard will focus on mission effectiveness, combat readiness and survivability as well as introducing an overall understanding of how an individual unit mission fits into and supports naval doctrine and its objectives. Experience shows it is essential that every warrior in our Navy be totally familiar with the mission of their command and be able to apply this knowledge to support the successful execution of the commands current and future missions."



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
COMMANDING OFFICER  
NMCB 25  
FPO AP 96601 – 5113

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